

7 June, 2012

TO: ALL NEWS EDITORS

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Equal Airtime for Political Parties to Promote Manifestos

The NUJ welcomes the decision by the Cabinet to allow all political parties contesting in the next general election to promote manifestos via public and private broadcasting stations.

This is a positive step and we believe that it will be welcomed by the public because voters should have access to information before they cast their ballots.

Early this year the NUJ submitted several proposals to the Parliamentary Select Committee on electoral reforms and this included giving fair media access to political parties.

The NUJ takes the stand that RTM, BERNAMA and other government media agencies should broadcast the manifestos during prime time and representatives of political parties should also be given equal opportunities and explain their policies and public issues, also during prime time.

As for private radio and TV stations, they should do a "national service" by also giving equal coverage to all irrespective whether Barisan Nasional or opposition.

The print and online media should also practice ethical journalism and provide balanced reporting.

We also call upon the print and online media owners to sell advertising space to all political parties.

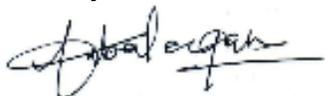
However, the NUJ hopes that a media monitoring committee would be established by the election commission once the Dewan Rakyat and state Legislative Assemblies are dissolved.

This committee would then be able to ensure that the Cabinet decision and ethical journalism are adhered to. This committee should have powers to censure those who violate any guidelines.

At the end of the day, the voters – who may be readers, viewers and listeners - will judge whether the media will play its meaningful role during the general election.

This is because the public expectation towards the media has been raised. They now have the opportunity to compare news and commentaries which are carried in the news portals and social media.

Thank you.



V. Anbalagan
General Secretary